

CASINO CARD GAME

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This patent application claims the benefit priority of United States Provisional
5 Application Nos. 60/398,455, filed July 25, 2002, and 60/401,575, filed August 6, 2002,
which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of Invention

10 Generally, the present invention relates to casino gaming. More specifically,
the present invention relates to a casino game that is a derivative of Blackjack.

2. Description of the Related Art

Blackjack is a card game typically played in a casino at a semicircular table.
15 Usually, seven player stations are equally spaced near an arcuate edge of the table.
On the table top near each player station is an imprint of a circle where a player
places a bet. The dealer is positioned near a straight edge of the table. The dealer
faces the players.

20 Blackjack is played with one or more standard decks of cards. When the
player is dealt an ace, it has a point value of either "1" or "11" at the election of the
player; a face card (jack, queen or king) has a point value of "10" and the remaining
cards ("2" through "10") have their "pip" or number value. The point values of cards
held by the player and the point values of cards held by the dealer are, respectively,
25 are added to obtain a player total point value and a dealer total point value.

After the bets are placed within the imprinted circle, each of the players and
the dealer are dealt a hand comprised of two cards. The cards of the player's hand
are dealt face-up. A first card of the dealer's hand is dealt facedown. A second card
30 of the dealer's hand is dealt face-up. The dealer ascertains the point value of the
facedown card without revealing it to the player.

When the player's hand has a total point value of "21", the player is said to
have Blackjack. Correspondingly, when the dealer's hand has the total point value of

"21", the dealer is said to have Blackjack whereupon the facedown card is turned face-up.

5 When the dealer has Blackjack, the dealer wins the Blackjack bet with two exceptions. The first exception occurs when the player's hand and the dealer's hand have the same total point value and is referred to as a push and the player's bet is returned to the player.

10 A second exception occurs when the dealer's face up card is an ace and the player posts a bet that is known as an insurance bet. The insurance bet typically equals one half of the Blackjack bet. When the dealer does not have Blackjack, the player loses the insurance bet. When the dealer has Blackjack, the Blackjack bet and the insurance bet are returned to the player.

15 The insurance bet is an example of what is known as a side bet. Moreover, the insurance bet is traditionally the only side bet that the player can make. The probability is one in thirteen that the dealer's face up card is an ace. Therefore, the insurance bet cannot be made very often. It should be appreciated that a variety of side bets that can frequently be made would increase the player's interest in
20 Blackjack

 When the player has Blackjack and the dealer does not, the player wins the Blackjack bet. When neither the dealer nor the player has Blackjack, the player has four options.

25 A first option is to have the player hand augmented by an additional card (referred to as a "hit"). The player can have successive hits until the total point value of the player hand exceeds "21". When the total point value of a hand exceeds "21" it is said to bust. The player loses the Blackjack bet when the player hand busts.

30 A second option is not to have the player hand augmented by the additional card (referred to as a "stand"). The player can stand at any time that the player hand has not busted.

A third option is available when the player hand is comprised of two cards that are a pair, such as a pair of queens, for an example. The player can split the pair into first and second player hands. An additional card is dealt to the first player hand and to the second player hand, each of which are played as described hereinbefore.

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A fourth option is typically available when the player's hand is comprised of two cards that have a total point value of either ten or eleven. The player is permitted to double the Blackjack bet and receive only one additional card.

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The decision to hit or stand is made with an objective of causing the player hand to have a total point value closer to "21" than the total point value of the dealer hand without busting. It should be understood that central factors in making the decision are the dealer's face-up card and the total point count of the player hand.

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After the player stands, the dealer's facedown card is turned face-up, whereby both cards of the dealer hand are face-up. When the dealer hand has a total point count of less than "17" the dealer must hit, until the dealer hand has a total point count of at least "17". When a hit causes the dealer hand to bust and the player hand has not busted, the player wins the Blackjack bet.

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When neither the player hand nor the dealer hand busts and the total point value of the dealer hand exceeds the total point value of the player hand, the dealer wins and vice versa. When there is a push, there is no winner; the bets are returned to the players.

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While the game of Blackjack, as detailed above, is well known in the industry, there is a need for new games to be developed. The development of successful casino card games must address several distinct criteria.

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As with all successful games, a successful casino card game must be sufficiently entertaining for the players. In order to be sufficiently entertaining, a card game must balance many, often competing factors. These factors include complexity and challenge of game play, the pace of game play, the element of chance, the level of player skill and strategy, and the amount of player interaction.

Aside from the effect on the entertainment value of the game, the complexity of game play is of practical importance to casino type wagering games. Unduly high complex rules of game play will prevent the attraction of new players to a casino game. Simplicity of game play allows the game to be easily accessible to all; however, overly simplistic game play often results in an unchallenging and unentertaining game.

The pace of game play is also of unique importance for a successful casino game. The rapid turnover, or cycle time, in the wagering rounds is preferred in a casino game to maximize the wagering cycles of the game. This must also be balanced against how the pace of the game play affects the entertainment offered by the game. In other words, at some point, further increasing the speed of the game will reduce the entertainment value of the game.

Regarding the element of chance, it is a hallmark of casino type games that the element of chance plays a substantial role in the game. A game based solely on skill can tend to inhibit new players in a casino game environment. However, in most casino card games, winning is based on a combination of skill and the element of chance, wherein a player's increased skill will increase his likelihood of winning particularly through repeated play. Consequently, the element of chance and the level of player skill and strategy necessary are both of importance.

As noted above, the amount of player interaction associated with the game is one of the elements factored into the entertainment that the game provides for the players. Player interaction concerns both the player's involvement with the game and the player's involvement with the remaining players. Further, in casino games, there is concern over the amount or effect of one player's actions on the remaining players. This is particularly true in games in which the players are playing primarily against the house (i.e., not directly against other players). In other words, it can be a problem in certain casino card games where one player's "poor play" is viewed by the remaining players as adversely affecting their likelihood of winning.

There is a continuous need in the casino gaming industry to develop entertaining games providing a new fresh look and feel which successfully balances all of the game factors including those discussed above.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to the present invention, there is provided a method for at least one player and a dealer to play a card game with a plurality of cards by sequentially dealing a first card to each player and a first card to the dealer, sequentially dealing a second card to each player and a second card to the dealer, and dealing additional
10 cards to each of the at least one player and the dealer selecting to receive additional cards, wherein the winner is one with the hand closest to 31 without exceeding 31.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Other advantages of the present invention are readily appreciated as the
15 same becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a top view of the playing table of the present invention.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Generally, the present invention provides a card game. Preferably, the card game is played in a casino. The principle of the present invention is a to obtain a hand that has a point total of less than or equal to 31, but greater than that of the dealer.

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The present invention relates to a casino wagering card gaming method utilizing at least one conventional fifty-two-card deck of cards. As well understood by those in the art, a conventional deck of cards includes thirteen ranks consisting of two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, jack, queen, king and ace, with four
30 suits of each rank, namely, diamond, heart, club and spade. A standard deck of playing cards is used and each card counts its face value, except aces, which have a value of one or eleven as is most beneficial to the count of the hand. Each player initially receives two cards. The dealer also receives two cards. One of the dealer's cards is dealt face down and the other of the dealer's cards is dealt face-up. In some

gaming establishments, the dealer receives his two cards at the same time that each player is dealt his two cards. In other gaming establishments, the dealer initially only receives one card which becomes the dealer's "up" card. After each player has taken additional cards, the dealer then receives his second card.

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The game of the present invention allows for multiple procedures to occur during the game. One procedure is "doubling down." When doubling down the player turns both of his cards face-up in front of him and makes a second wager equal to the amount of his initial ante. The dealer deals to the player one additional
10 card and the resulting hand establishes the numerical count for the player's hand. The player can double down at any time during their turn. In other words, the player can double down regardless of the number of cards in their hand.

Another procedure is "splitting pairs." If the player's first two cards are a pair,
15 the player can "split" those cards into two separate hands. His original bet is applied to one of the hands and he makes an additional ante for the other hand. The player receives a new second card for each of the split hands. Each of the split hands is played separately and the player proceeds by standing or taking hits until he has achieved a hand count upon which he wishes to stand or busts. Preferably, the
20 player can only split three times, thus creating four hands.

The player can "double down" on either or both of his split hands if he is eligible to do so under the "doubling down" rules. The player can split again if he pairs up on either or both of his split hands. In most gaming establishments, a player
25 can also split his hand if both of his initial cards are ten count cards (tens, jacks, queens or kings). For example, a player can split if he receives a ten and a queen, or a jack and a king, or any combinations of ten count cards.

The term "stand" is intended to denote that the player is keeping the amount
30 of cards in their hand without adding any additional cards to the hand.

The term "hit" is intended to describe when the player is requesting an additional card from the dealer.

Referring to "regular bet", this betting option is the standard bet for a player to beat the dealer regardless of the amount of cards received by the player or the dealer (as long as the player does not go over 31 in total point count). If the player stays with a certain count of 31 or less and the dealer "busts" or goes over 31 in the total point count for the dealer's cards, then the player wins.

The method of playing the game is as follows. After each player has made his bet, the dealing of the cards commences. One or more standard decks of playing cards can be used. Each player initially receives two cards. The dealer is initially dealt two cards and this deal represents the dealer's first hand. One or both of the dealer's cards is dealt face-up and becomes the dealer's "up" card. Preferably, both of the dealer's card are dealt face up. Alternatively, the dealer initially receives only one card, which is the dealer's up card, and the dealer does not receive his second card until all players have drawn to their hands. Each player then takes hits or stands, and makes additional bets such as insurance or doubling down or splitting pairs, as desired by the player. Once all of the players have completed the play, the dealer then takes hits or stands as required by the predetermined conventional manner of play of the dealer's hand. Once the dealer has completed the play of his hand, winning player's wagers are paid and losing player's wagers are collected.

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More specifically, the game begins with each player and the dealer being dealt two cards. The dealer's hand must show at least one card, and preferably both cards. The dealer must stand on 27 or higher unless the dealer has 14. When the dealer has 14, the dealer can stand on 14, otherwise the dealer can only stand on 27 or higher. Generally, six to eight decks can be used, however the game can be played with only one deck. Once the players and the dealer have received their cards, the next phase of the game begins. The player is then allowed to request additional cards in an attempt to reach a point total of 31. The goal of the player is to have a hand with a point total closer or equivalent to 31 than the dealer's hand. However, a hand total of 14 with the two cards originally dealt is an automatic winning hand, unless the dealer has a point total equal to 14, i.e. push. Additionally, if both the dealer and the player have the same hand, then it is a push, in other words there is no winner. The payout of the winning hand is determined by the casino in which the game is being played. Preferably, the payout for 14 is 1:1.

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Further, if the player has 14 with the first two cards, the player is preferably paid immediately by the dealer.

5 The point total of the cards is calculated based upon the card values commonly used in Blackjack. In other words, face cards and tens are worth ten points, aces are worth either one or eleven points and all remaining cards are worth their face value.

10 While playing the game there is no limit to the number of cards a player can request as many cards as desired and the player can double down at any time. When doubling down, the player only receives one additional card. Further, the player can split pairs into separate hands. The splitting is preferably limited to four times, however, this number can vary based upon the casino in which the game is being tested. Split aces can have as many cards added to them in order to reach
15 the desired 31.

The playing surface is preferably a preprinted felt covering that is placed on top of a gambling table. Alternatively, the playing surface can be simulated on a video screen and the game can be played via computer under software control with
20 the cards being simulated and the player participating at interactive video station. Depicted on the playing surface are a single dealer position and multiple player positions. The layout of each player position is identical to all other player positions. Although seven player positions are shown, as many as ten players or as few as one player and one dealer can play the game. The card game disclosed in the present
25 patent application can be played on a gaming machine such as a video machine or in any gaming environment. Therefore, the term "table" as used in the claims is intended to encompass any video game or other card game that uses the unique card game of the present invention. As shown in Figure 1, the card game is played on a tabletop 10 with an arcuate edge 12. The tabletop 10 carries imprinted player
30 palettes 13-17 with even spacing there between. The palettes 13-17 are similar. Each of the palettes 13-17 is proximal to a player station adjacent to the edge 12.

The casino card gaming method of the present invention can be played on the gaming table 10 illustrated in Figure 1, which is specifically adapted for playing the

game of the present invention as is described herein. As with poker or Blackjack, new players can come and go after every given round.

5 The given round in the method of the present invention begins by determining the players for the given round prior to dealing the hand of cards to each of the designated players for that round. This determination is most easily accomplished by receiving ante wagers by all of the players of a given round. Referring to table 10, any of up to six players generally at player positions 12 can elect to play for a given round by providing an ante wager on the predetermined area 14 for receiving ante wagers for each of the given players. The table 10 can include a title or other
10 explanatory text 11, such as "Lucky 14" and logo, which are trademarks of Applicant. The explanatory text 8 on the table 8 can also include rules and/or payment information to assist the players. The amount of the ante wager can be determined by the casino and can even be reflected by text in the area 14 for receiving the ante
15 wagers. Such explanatory text in various locations on the table 10 assists new players in understanding the game and increase game play and playability.

Following the designation of players, a hand of cards is dealt to each of the designated players for a given round with each player receiving a player's hand
20 comprising the same number of cards. Each player's hand is provided (i.e., dealt) by the dealer operating from a dealer's position 18 and who positions each player's hand in an area 22 in front of the player's area 12. The player's hand as dealt can be face down or face up. The dealing of the cards face up can allow the casino operators to minimize improper player interaction or possible tampering with the
25 cards. However, providing the hands face down provides a more conventional card game minimizing additional information to the remaining players, such as what is likely or not likely to be in the common cards and bonus cards. Additionally, a face down dealing of the cards allows for additional variations in the game of the present invention including subsequent wagering, and reward for the best player's hand.

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A player can draw additional cards (take "hits") in order to try and beat the count of the dealer's hand. If the player's count exceeds 31, the player "busts." The player can "stand" on any count of 31 or less. When a player busts, he loses his wager regardless of whether or not the dealer busts.

After all of the players have taken hits or have stood on their hand, the dealer "stands" or "hits" based on pre-established rules for the game. Typically, if the dealer has less than 27, the dealer must take a hit. If the dealer has 27 or more, the dealer stands.

In one embodiment of the present invention, the dealer must take a hit whenever the dealer's hand is a "soft 27" count. The term "soft" means that the Ace is valued as a count of 1, instead of as a count of 11. A soft 27 occurs when the dealer has an Ace and a Six (or multiple cards that add up to 6). The dealer will stand on soft 28's, soft 29's and soft 30's.

After the dealer's final hand has been established, the numerical count of the dealer's hand is compared to the numerical count of the player's hand. If the dealer busts, the player wins regardless of the numerical count of his hand. If neither the player nor the dealer have busted, the closest hand to a numerical count of 31, without going over, wins; tie hands are a "push."

The following payout is a possible representation of a suggested payout schedule of the casino card gaming method of the present invention:

Double ace(s) wins over everything and wins more than the usual payout.
Double 2(s) wins over everything and wins more than the usual payout.
Double 3(s) wins over everything and wins more than the usual payout.
Double 4(s) wins over everything and wins more than the usual payout.
Double 5(s) wins over everything and wins more than the usual payout.
Double 6(s) wins over everything and wins more than the usual payout.
Double 7(s) wins over everything and wins more than the usual payout.
Double 8(s) wins over everything and wins more than the usual payout.
Double 9(s) wins over everything and wins more than the usual payout.
Double 10(s) wins over everything and wins more than the usual payout.
Double jack(s) wins over everything and wins more than the usual payout.
Double queen(s) wins over everything and wins more than the usual payout.
Double king(s) wins over everything and wins more than the usual payout.

Although the application describes the invention as a table game, it should be understood that the invention contemplates play on a slot machine and on the Internet.

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The method of play of the present invention is also applicable to an electronic version of the card game of the present invention, which can be played on electronic gaming devices. Such devices can be configured to allow a single player to play against the dealer or there can be multiple player stations all playing against a single dealer. Representative of the latter type of electronic Video Twenty-One is United States Patent Number 4,614,342 to Takashima, incorporated herein by reference, which can be modified to incorporate the rules of the present invention.

In the electronic version, the live dealer is replaced by computer hardware and software, but the method of play of the game is the same as that of the live version described above.

Throughout this application, author and year and patents by number reference various publications, including United States patents. Full citations for the publications are listed below. The disclosures of these publications and patents in their entireties are hereby incorporated by reference into this application in order to more fully describe the state of the art to which this invention pertains.

The invention has been described in an illustrative manner, and it is to be understood that the terminology that has been used is intended to be in the nature of words of description rather than of limitation.

Obviously, many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. It is, therefore, to be understood that within the scope of the appended claims, the invention can be practiced otherwise than as specifically described.